

U.S. Serial No.: 10/680,538

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the heated air plenum further comprises a bottom surface spaced from and opposing the top surface and forming a duct therebetween, the duct having a height, the height progressively decreasing along the first direction.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the first apertures and the second apertures are in substantial alignment as the conveyor moves along the first direction.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, further comprising a conveyor cooling fan.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, further comprising a side air duct adjacent the conveyor along the first direction, the side air duct transmitting heated air from the heated air plenum.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a supplemental heat source for the side air duct.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the conveyor further comprises at least two side-by-side ~~conveyors~~ conveyor chains running along the first direction.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising a center air duct between the two side-by-side conveyor chains, the center air duct transmitting heated air from the heated air plenum.

Claim 9 (original): The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising a supplemental heat source for the center air duct.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the displacement is variable, thereby accommodating articles of different sizes.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising [[a]] means for varying the displacement.

Claim 12 (original): The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the means for varying the displacement is manual.

Claim 13 (original): The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the means for varying the displacement is automatic.

U.S. Serial No.: 10/680,538

Claim 14 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the second apertures are about 7/16 ["] inch to 7/32 ["] inch in size, thereby resulting in substantially vertical laminar air flow through the second apertures.

Claim 15 (original): The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the air flow from the center air duct is adjustable.

Claim 16 (original): The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the air flow from the center air duct is diffused.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the second apertures further comprise nozzles.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, further comprising a film separator on the conveyor.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising a film separator between the two side-by-side conveyor chains.

Claims 20 and 21 (canceled).

Claim 22 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim [21] 2, further comprising one or more baffles selectively blocking air flow across the one or more air lanes.

Claims 23-52 (canceled).

Claim 53 (currently amended): Apparatus for applying heat to articles enclosed in shrink-wrap film, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a conveyor having a plurality of first apertures therethrough;
- (b) wherein the conveyor moves in a first direction;
- (c) a source of heated air;
- (d) a heated air plenum under the conveyor and supporting the conveyor, the plenum having a top surface having a plurality of second apertures therethrough;
- (e) a fan blowing heated air from the source of heated air through the heated air plenum, through the second apertures, and through the first apertures;
- (f) a return air plenum returning air to the source of heated air;
- (g) a shroud partially enclosing the conveyor along the first direction and spaced therefrom at a displacement, forming therewith a film shrinking area between the conveyor and the shroud; and

U.S. Serial No.: 10/680,538

- (h) an air flow control mechanism controlling the volume of heated air passing through the second apertures, the air flow control mechanism further comprising one or more air lanes in the heated air plenum, the air lanes directing the air flow only at specific, designated portions of the article; and
- (i) wherein each of the air lanes are open and extend substantially parallel to the first direction for a major length of said heated air plenum.

Claim 54 (canceled).

Claim 55 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 53, further comprising one or more fixed baffles selectively blocking air flow across the one or more air lanes.